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A great number of American children are growing up in socially deprived surroundings. These deprivations are reflected in lower educational achievement. Teachers should have special preparation in order to lessen this waste of educational potential. Project Beacon is an effort to introduce within the public school system a permanent corps of psychoeducational specialists who have been rigorously trained to meet the educational needs of socially disadvantaged children and their parents. It is a long-range program to attack the problems of delinquency and school dropouts through (a) behavioral science research into the relationship between learning and social disadvantage; (b) graduate level training of psychoeducational personnel such as psychologists, guidance specialists, administrators, and teachers who work with socially disadvantaged children and their parents.

Disadvantages include improper learning habits, obscured vocational and personal goals, inadequate preparation and motivation, and conditions of life which discourage the practices and values necessary for adjustment and achievement in our society. The project seeks to improve the educational achievement levels of these children, and to enhance the preparation and add new dimensions to career opportunities for personnel who want to work with disadvantaged children through public schools.

Training for Project Beacon student teachers centers around three categories: home, community, and school analysis; child appraisal; and psychoeducational processes and guided development. A description of each category includes the courses offered and parallel field work, in the community, in schools, and in the psychological center.

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Project Beacon:

A project addressed to the needs of the socially disadvantaged

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Yeshiva University

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A NEW LOOK AT SPECIAL PROBLEMS

PROJECT BEACON: A PROJECT ADDRESSED TO THE NEEDS OF THE SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED

JOSHUA A. FISHMAN, Dean, Graduate School of Education, Yeshiva University

An alarming proportion of American children and youth are growing up in socially deprived and socially disorganized surroundings. These deprivations are reflected in lower educational achievement. We cannot afford to waste the educational potential of so much of our population. Such waste is repugnant to our democratic ideals and counter to our national interest on the world scene.

Disadvantaged communities—in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and elsewhere—offer challenges to enthusiasm and altruism similar to those found in the underdeveloped areas of the world served by the Peace Corps. These communities also offer valuable training possibilities analogous to those that a physician gets in a hospital, or a lawyer in litigation.

Not enough candidates of quality enter education because many young people do not recognize the full career possibilities in this field. They feel that the profession may be too circumscribing, that it does not offer enough in status, salary, or opportunity to serve mankind effectively. The many leadership opportunities in education—in school curriculum, administration, supervision, guidance, testing, and research—must be made known to a larger audience.

In addition, many highly competent teachers seek professional and career extensions of classroom teaching in new and more challenging approaches to education and to the educational difficulties of socially deprived areas throughout our country and throughout the world.

Teacher-training institutions rarely acknowledge that significant field experiences can be obtained in the disadvantaged community and among disadvantaged children. In order to contribute to the raising of the educational level of these communities as well as to improve the training of educational personnel, Yeshiva University's Graduate School of Education seeks to prepare well-motivated professionals for career responsibilities in disadvantaged communities.

Through its Project Beacon, the graduate school of education will bring together: (*a*) in-service educational personnel working in socially deprived areas of New York and other major metropolitan areas; (*b*) preservice personnel seeking preparation for assignments to such areas, and (*c*) the faculty and resource consultants of the graduate school of education.

In-service personnel will be licensed teachers and administrators who are training for advanced professional opportunities and responsibilities. While pursuing their employment assignments in socially deprived areas, they will take course work at the graduate school of

education leading to higher degrees and professional specialization. Their rich experience will be utilized as well as extended through Project Beacon programs.

I. The Project

Project Beacon is an effort to introduce within the public school system of the United States a permanent corps of psychoeducational specialists who have been rigorously trained to meet the educational needs of socially disadvantaged children and their parents.

Project Beacon recognizes that present efforts to meet the challenge of high school dropouts and juvenile delinquency are by their nature primarily palliative measures which can only briefly ameliorate the conditions with which they seek to cope.

The need in education is to build a structure which can support and contain the kind of cultural and technological training of youth that will prevent the recurrence of delinquency and school dropouts.

Project Beacon is, therefore, a long-range program that attacks these problems through (*a*) behavioral science research into the relationship between learning and social disadvantage; (*b*) graduate level training of psychoeducational personnel (school psychologists, educational psychologists, guidance specialists, administrators and supervisors, teachers of regular classes, and teachers of special classes) for work with socially disadvantaged children and their parents. The project represents the collective efforts of three departments at the Graduate School of Education, Yeshiva University.

The children that Project Beacon seeks to help are found largely in depressed urban areas but also have their counterparts in our growing northern suburbs, and in the rural South, Southwest, and Midwest. They are largely members of Negro, Puerto Rican, Indian, and Mexican-American minority groups.

The disadvantages usually encountered in these children consist of improper learning habits and obscured vocational and personal goals which handicap them in their efforts to master traditional academic tasks; inadequate preparation and motivation for the mastery of those competencies basic to future success in an advanced technological society; and conditions of life which operate to discourage or preclude the practices and values which have become traditional prerequisites to adjustment and achievement in our society.

Although Project Beacon takes into account the necessary social modifications which will be required for a maximal attack upon the problems posed by socially disadvantaged status, the project itself is based upon the assumption that much can be done in the present context through the appropriate efforts of properly trained public school personnel. Through Project Beacon we seek to—

1. Improve the educational achievement levels of children handicapped by social disadvantage; and
2. Enhance preparation and add new dimensions to career opportunities for personnel who accept the challenge of working with disadvantaged children and their parents through the public schools.

These goals are pursued through the development of competence and skill in four basic areas by Project Beacon teacher-students:

1. Psychoeducational appraisal through which the existing intellectual abilities and weaknesses of the children are identified along

with those patterns of adaptation which foster academic learning and personal adjustment;

2. Psychoeducational management through which the results of the appraisal are used to design and introduce individual and group learning experiences appropriate for the modification or circumvention of learning disabilities and for the utilization of existing learning abilities;

3. Psychosocial intervention to nurture and direct interests and motivation, to provide guidance and support, to reward and reinforce, and to create the climate and conditions appropriate to maximal growth;

4. Behavioral science research to pose questions, collect data and interpret results in a continuous process of verification of each aspect of the program.

Within the framework of these four emphases, a number of graduate training programs have been developed in the departments of curriculum and instruction, special education, and educational psychology and guidance at the graduate school of education. In addition to the training aspects of Project Beacon, several demonstration, curriculum development, and research programs are underway or anticipated.

II. Implications of Characteristics and Needs of Learners in Socially and Culturally Disadvantaged Communities for the Preparation of Beacon School Personnel

In the preparation of school personnel for service to socially and culturally disadvantaged children, the characteristics of these children suggest three categories of professional emphasis around which training experiences for school personnel need to be organized:

A. Home, community, and school analysis;
B. Child appraisal; and
C. Psychoeducational processes and their guided development.

A. HOME, COMMUNITY, AND SCHOOL ANALYSIS

1. The usual social class, economic group, and cultural system identifications of school personnel in the United States render most of such persons deficient in their knowledge and attitudes toward the people and the neighborhoods which constitute the families and homes of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, one area of crucial preparation for most school personnel in Project Beacon will be the nature of the homes and communities from which such children come. Teachers and other educational personnel require awareness of the following factors influencing the academic behavior of disadvantaged area pupils and parents:

(*a*) family disorganization and familial patterns other than those common in American, white, middle-class society.

(*b*) Patterns of community disorganization (poverty, delinquency, unemployment, migrancy, illiteracy) other than those common in American, white, middle-class society.

(*c*) Cultural biases (attitudes toward study and intellectualization, toward social advancement, toward postponement of gratifications), cultural loyalties, cultural conflicts and congruences, other than those common in American, white, middle-class society.

(*d*) Their own (i.e., the teachers' own) backgrounds, abilities and values, as potentially biasing and facilitating characteristics in working with parents and pupils from deprived areas.

(*e*) Community welfare organizations—public and private, oriented toward the individual or toward the group—designed to meet human needs in such matters as family relationships, physical and mental health, economic security, and legal protection. The potential for collaboration between such agencies and the school.

The above-mentioned awarenesses may be instilled by the following courses, field work, and seminar experiences.

Courses (for preservice and in-service personnel)	*Fieldwork (primarily for preservice personnel)*
(i) The urban community: The ecology of cities; development of urban institutions and agencies; effects on personality, health, family, religion, population, and government; social pathology and urban blight; planning for redevelopment; research methods.	(i) Visits to police courts, hospitals, community groupwork agencies, governmental departments, community casework agencies, religious authorities; integrating seminar on social organization.
(ii) Ethnic relations in the United States: Intergroup relations, acculturation, cultural pluralism and self-maintenance; prejudice and patterns of adjustment; social, legal, educational and economic status of minorities.	(ii) Visits to intergroup agencies, governmental departments, self-maintenance institutions. Integrating seminar.
(iii) Social psychology of education: The relevance of familial, communal, religious, cultural and other social factors for the educational functioning of pupils, teachers, and parents.	(iii) Case study of the resolution of a child-centered administrative problem in an assigned Beacon school.

In conjunction with such courses, field experiences and seminars, the GSE will undertake to systematically collect, organize, and release for professional use information and teacher training material dealing with the impact of home and community factors on deprived area schools.

(iv) Psychology of minority group children: Analysis of child-rearing practices in American minority groups; differential value systems, attitudes toward education and social institutions, aspirations and expectations, and personality pattern trends in minority cultural and ethnic groups and socially disadvantaged populations.	(iv) Participation in opinion sampling survey covering at least 10 appropriately selected families. Integrating seminar.

Courses (for preservice and in-service personnel)	*Fieldwork (primarily for preservice personnel)*
(v) Guidance and education: Introduction to the guidance of children and youth in elementary and secondary schools; history, theoretical foundations, principles and ethics of guidance; significance for pupil adjustment of social, economic, and ethnic group status; cultural influences and varieties of extraschool experiences; implications for guidance function.	(v) Observation of guidance programs and services in Project Beacon schools.

2. For many of the Project Beacon children school will emerge as the sole or major consistently stabilizing influence in their lives. The school may serve as the vehicle through which most of their growth needs and sustaining experiences are mediated. An understanding of the sociology of this institution and the dynamics of its function is a second area of learning need for school personnel. Teachers and other educational personnel specializing for discharge of responsibilities with disadvantaged area pupils and parents require awareness of the following within-school factors:

(*a*) Structural and functional factors influencing school policy, procedure and potential: (community control; administration and faculty as foci of influence; departmental organization; certificational, salary, training, and other within-faculty differential).

(*b*) Group-dynamics of intraprofessional, as well as teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil relations. Obtaining group understanding, acceptance, and assistance. The teacher as a focal point of influence on colleagues, pupils, and community.

The above-mentioned awarenesses may be instilled by the following course, fieldwork and seminar experiences.

Course	*Seminar and lecture series*
The school as a microcosm: Conscious and unconscious within-school barriers moderating the effectiveness of the specially trained teacher; institutional analysis and group dynamics in group decisionmaking and goal-directed behavior.	Clinical case seminars, in conjunction with student teaching or internship, with the participation of inservice clinical instructors (teachers, administrators, and others).

In connection with this combined course and clinical seminar, the GSE will undertake to systematically collect, organize, and release for professional use information and teacher training material pertaining to the impact of within-school factors on professional effectiveness within deprived area schools.

3. In addition to understanding the school as an institution, it is important that school personnel understand and master the dynamics of classroom interaction. The application of knowledge of individual and group behavior to facilitate learning in group situations and as a vehicle of motivation and attitudinal

task in Beacon classrooms. These awarenesses and skills may be instilled by the following course:

Course	*Seminar and lecture series*
Group dynamics and classroom interaction: Current theories and research related to the operation of classroom groups based on mental health principles. Group attitudes, communication channels, development of power structure, lines of influence and group boundaries; specific classroom operations such as teacher structuring of expected behavior, use of peer controls, group behavior and guidance methods, control of behavior contagion, methods of coping with poor behavior; general behavior education and the physical use of the classroom in dealing with group behavior will be examined.	Course will make use of public school classes for observation and community center groups for field experience in group management.

4. Several courses in standard GSE teacher training curriculums also have content and emphasis appropriate to the training concerns of project beacon in the area of home, community, and school analysis. Among these are:

Social Foundations of Education.
History of Education Thought.
The School in American Society.
Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences.
Economics and Society.
Sociological Analysis.
Sociology of the Family.
Social Change and Social Disorganization.
Cultural Anthropology.

Certain of the above courses are also included in Beacon programs and have been modified or enriched so as to be of particular benefit to Beacon trainees.[1]

B. CHILD APPRAISAL

We have identified as a critical task for school personnel that of determining the nature of the learner and the quality of the learner's experience. The importance of the qualitative appraisal and descriptive analysis of the pupil's capacities (strengths and deficits) and of the dynamics of the pupil's development (historical, contemporary, and anticipated) cannot be overemphasized in this program. All Beacon personnel will need specialized orientation and competence in the area of child appraisal. The following are examples of Beacon courses and fieldwork in this area.

[1] E.g., see course outline for the "History of Educational Thought" for Beacon preservice students.

Courses	*Fieldwork*
Techniques of child and environmental appraisal: A study of the interpretation and utilization of educational, psychological, social casework, medical and psychiatric data in the appraisal of children and their conditions of life. Orientation and sensitization to qualitative analysis of behavior and experience in relation to the planning of educational strategies. Emphasis will be given to the use of the case study and the cumulative record in identification and screening; diagnosis and placement; curriculum design and modification; management and continuous appraisal.	Students will utilize the graduate school of education's center and developmental evaluation clinic conferences for field experience and clinical as well as school data for records analysis.
Mental and educational measurement: Measurement of intellectual and educational functioning; nature and utilization of standardized and nonstandardized tests and procedures; principles and practices of test construction; problems of appraisal in multicultural populations; evaluation in the educational process.	Students will examine sample testing materials and observe measurement procedures in the psychological center.
Sociocultural disadvantage and associated learning disabilities: Primary abilities (perceptual discrimination, retention, conceptualization, communication, and motor coordination) as they are affected by early and prolonged social and cultural disadvantage.	Students will observe selected subjects in the psychological center and at Project Beacon schools.
Diagnosis of specific learning disabilities: Identification and evaluation of specific learning disabilities; disturbances in perceptual discrimination and habituation, symbolic representation, concept formation and generalization, quantitative conceptualization, and memory.	Students will conduct psychoeducational evaluations under supervision in the psychological center and at Project Beacon schools.
Advanced psychometric methods: Design of strategies in the evaluation of potential for learning and patterns of adaptation; utilization of a variety of procedures and instruments in the appraisal of typical and underachieving children.	Students will be afforded supervised laboratory experience in the psychological center.

Other standard GSE courses appropriate to the area of child appraisal are as follows:

Measurement and Appraisal for Counselors.
Intelligence and Personality Appraisal I and II.
Psychometric Theory and Methods I and II.
Practicum in Guidance I.
Practicum in School Psychology.

Certain of the above courses are included in Beacon programs.

C. PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL PROCESSES AND THEIR GUIDED DEVELOPMENT

The Beacon trainee must not only know how to accurately appraise the child but he must know how to act on the basis of such appraisals; he must know how to utilize the principles of educational and developmental psychology and the practices of modern pedagogy to bring about the types of academic-cognitive growth that are needed by disadvantaged children. Thus psychoeducational processes and their guided development are a particularly vital area of specialization for Beacon trainees.

Courses	*Fieldwork*
Child development and learning: Growth, developmental and adaptation patterns in infancy and childhood, implications for academic, psychological and social learning.	Students observe appropriate age groups in school and community agency settings.
Adolescent development and learning: Adolescence and maturity as related to educational and social development; implications for academic, psychological and social learning.	Students observe appropriate age groups in school and community agency settings.
Educational psychology: Applied psychology in education; organization of behavior, individual differences, perception, cognition, motivation, learning, and evaluation as related to the educational process. (Note course outline in ch. V, below.)	Students participate in ongoing Project Beacon field research projects as assistants in observation
Comparative education: Contrast and comparison of alternative systems of education within the United States, as well as between the United States and Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and other nations.	Students observe differences in curricular patterns and emphases in varying metropolitan area schools (disadvantaged communities and more privileged neighborhoods).
Teaching language arts, K–6: Teaching oral and written communication through consideration of (a) listening, speaking, and reading; (b) children's literature and enriched experiences; and (c) handwriting, spelling, and creative writing.	Student internship in Project Beacon schools. Integrating seminar.

Courses	*Fieldwork*
Teaching mathematics, K–6: Quantitative and numerical concept development; denominate numbers, mental computation, and estimation; practical problem solving; integration of response to concrete and abstract stimuli; sequence in teaching the fundamental processes.	Student internship in Project Beacon schools. Integrating seminar.
Teaching social studies, K–6: Introduction of social concepts through study of the society in which the child lives; progression through neighborhood, city, State, Nation, world; utilization of experience related unit teaching and current events.	Students teaching in Project Beacon schools. Integrating seminar.
Social disadvantage and special class functions: Nature and extent of communication and other interactions in the child's social environment during preschool years; relationship of limited mobility and circumscribed experience to status of the preschool handicapped child and indicated curriculum modifications.	
Informational resources in guidance: Identification, evaluation, and utilization of resource information in guidance; orientation to occupational and educational information and to community resources; lines of communication and cooperation in multiagency collaboration.	Observation and assistance in referral services through psychological center and consultation with selected community agencies.
Guidance of socially disadvantaged children: Characteristics and needs of socially disadvantaged children; significance for pupil adjustment of disadvantaged status, cultural differences and normvarying patterns of stimulation; implications for guidance functions.	
Concepts of psychoeducational management: Applications of the biosocial sciences to the modification of behavior; concepts underlying psychotherapeutic procedures; implications of intervention in the modification of behavior and personality development;	

Courses	*Fieldwork*
tion; development of planned, corrective social and psychological learning experiences.	
Team operations in psychoeducational management: Roles of teacher, guidance worker, psychologist, social worker and school administrator in a multidiscipline team concerned with identification, prevention and rehabilitation of psychosocially handicapped children.	Students observe and participate in multidiscipline conferences to plan psychoeducational strategies for selected children in Project Beacon schools and the Psychological Center.
Seminar in curriculum and methods for handicapped socially disadvantaged children: Theoretical and research considerations surrounding and integrating the problems of teachers, guidance workers and administrators working with handicapped, socially disadvantaged children.	Interdepartmental staff meets regularly with experienced special educators, guidance workers and administrators.
Experimentation in psychoeducational processes: Review, design and participation in experimental programs in compensatory and accelerated learning experiences for the psychosocially handicapped and other children.	Students will be assigned to the program of Research in Normal and Aberrant Development (AECM), the Institute for Developmental Studies, and to Project Beacon schools for student conducted experimentation and research under the supervision of senior research scientists and senior psychoeducational practitioners.
Remediation of specific learning disabilities: Design and execution of remediation procedures for such learning disabilities as disburbance in perceptual discrimination and habituation, symbolic representation, concept formation, concept generalization, quantitative conceptualization, and memory.	Students will plan and conduct remedial procedures under supervision in the Psychological Center and in Project Beacon schools.

Other standard GSE courses appropriate to the area of psychoeducational processes and their guided development are as follows:

Human Development I and II.
Patterns of Human Adjustment.
Childhood Disorders of Behavior and Mentation.
The Psycho-Socially Handicapped Child.
Physical and Mental Health Status.
Human Learning and Behavioral Change.
Guidance in Elementary Education.
Guidance in Secondary Education.
Techniques of Guidance.

Psycho-social Problems of the Handicapped.
Children's Literature K–6.
Music for Elementary School Children.
Arts and Crafts K–6.
Science for Elementary Schools.
Curriculum for Gifted Children and Youth.
Diagnostic and Remedial Techniques in Reading.
Principles of Psychotherapeutic Education.
Curricular Patterns in Therapeutic Education.
Curriculum Development in Therapeutic Education (K–6)
Curriculum Modifications in Therapeutic Education (Secondary).
Practicum in Therapeutic Education.
Seminar in Therapeutic Education.

Many of the above courses are included in Beacon programs and have been modified or enriched so as to be of particular benefit to Beacon trainees.

All of the above course listings do not automatically summate into training programs. Programs are more than a summation of courses. Programs imply integrating concepts and experiences.

III. Concluding Remarks

It would be unrealistic to conclude this statement without some practical comments on costs and finances. Thus far, Yeshiva University has carried all of the costs of planning, staffing, and publicizing Project Beacon and its programs. Because these activities have been conducted by individuals who are already charged with many other responsibilities, Project Beacon work has had to be carved out of vacations, weekends, and late evening efforts. In the future, optimal development of Project Beacon will require the addition of academic personnel whose major responsibility will be to the programs in this area.

At a minimum, two senior staff additions would seem to be called for:

1. *Director of Beacon training programs.*—An individual who can work with department chairmen and other GSE staff members in planning and supervising new courses, field experiences, and internships.
2. *Director of Beacon evaluation and research.*—An individual who can make sure that training programs are consistently evaluated against pertinent criteria and that basic research is conducted and its findings fed into the training programs.

Beyond the two directorships reported above it would be most desirable to strengthen Beacon programs by adding the following specialists to the Beacon staff:

3. *Department of curriculum and instruction.*—A specialist in reading and other language skills. Since these skills are basic to school achievement, it would seem highly desirable to obtain the services of a research and training specialist in this area.
4. *Department of curriculum and instruction.*—A specialist in administration and supervision of urban schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Such an individual would need to have sociological sophistication in institutional analysis as well as research and training experience.

5. *Department of educational psychology and guidance.*—A specialist in developmental psychology with particular training and research interests in the socially disadvantaged child.

6. *Department of educational psychology and guidance.*—A specialist in educational measurement and child appraisal with particular training and research interests in the socially disadvantaged child.

The annual budget for the minimal number of staff additions and their supporting secretarial-clerical assistants would be approximately $40,000. The annual budget for the full complement of staff additions and their supporting secretarial-clerical assistants would be approximately $96,000. The Graduate School of Education may be able to make all of these staff additions on the basis of university funds alone over a 5- or 6-year period. If these appointments are to be made more quickly and if Project Beacon is to move into high gear that much earlier, appreciable support from outside granting agencies must be sought for several years.

A similar set of circumstances pertains to fellowships and paid internships for Beacon students. Thus far, the Graduate School of Education has succeeded in providing four fellowships at $2,400 per year for Beacon students. In addition, arrangements have already been made with an outside agency to provide 10 paid internships for Beacon trainees each valued at $1,800 per annum. However, if our Beacon training programs are to progress beyond the skeletal stage, many more fellowships and internships are required. Thus, if each training program is to offer 10 awards at an average dollar value of $2,100 each, at least 90 awards would be required at an overall dollar value of $190,000 per year.

In this instance it is clear that university funds cannot provide the necessary number of awards in the forseeable future, although some slow increase in the number of university awards to students will doubtlessly occur. Yet, unless the necessary funds are forthcoming, the Beacon programs will neither meet the social need that is already so severe nor will they fulfill the intellectual potential inherent in them as programs of improved training for educational personnel.

Thus it is clear that funds in the neighborhood of $285,000 per year will be needed for several years if Project Beacon is to become an effective operation in the near future. Although the university stands ready to contribute some of the necessary funds, other sources must obviously be tapped for the remainder. Certainly, $285,000 per year is a great deal of money. On the other hand, it is not really an unheard-of sum, even for such relatively underdeveloped fields as educational experimentation, training, and public service. We hope that the necessary funds can be obtained in one way or another for there are few needs that are as urgent as those that Project Beacon is designed to meet. We believe that it is in this area of special need that Federal funds might be appropriated.

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[1] References mentioned in conjunction with the course outlines presented in section V are not listed here